



ASSEMBLYMEMBER
NICOLE PARRA

Representing the 30th Assembly District



Parra Notes

April 15, 2008

Hello Friends,

As Chair of the Assembly Agriculture Committee, **I held on Informational Hearing titled “Green Agriculture: Addressing Regulatory Challenges” on April 2.**

In general, the purpose was to discuss the viability of biofuels and bioenergy, and to review promising agricultural technologies. We discussed some key topics as California’s agriculture industry tackles sustainability issues and meeting the mandates of AB 32 dealing with climate change. A number of excellent panelists participated: from the farming community, industry representatives, academics, and state regulators.

This “Green Ag” Hearing highlighted many best practices underway in the industry, as well as what state government can do to foster and encourage these practices. Agriculture is the original “sustainable development,” long before the term was even coined. Our farmers know that healthy soil and clean air and water are essential to producing quality agricultural commodities. For thousands of years, farmers have had to be good stewards of the land to ensure productive crops.

Growing up in Kern County taught me the value of agriculture. It is critical that we, as a state, support our agriculture industry. **The Central Valley – and California in general – helps feed the world.** Our companies, farmers, and workers have a world-class reputation, and if we are going to remain the leaders in agriculture, we must do everything we can to keep this industry competitive. Investing in California’s agriculture is investing in our future.

A special thanks to Dino Giacomazzi of Giacomazzi Farms in Hanford, Teresa Plascencia of the Fresno County Farm Bureau, and Assembly Agriculture Committee staff for their leadership, inspiration, and hard work in putting this worthy hearing together.

I would also encourage all interested parties to attend the **Joint Forum on Bioenergy Sustainability conference in Sacramento on May 28-30.** It is co-sponsored by the California Biomass Consortium. For more details, visit: <http://biomass.ucdavis.edu>

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What’s Happening in Sacramento

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE. The State Assembly has placed severe restrictions on

the monthly travel expenses allotted to each Member's office. This new limitation went into effect April 1. As you know, I have put a priority on my staff attending events throughout the 30th Assembly District. It has always been important to me to have my constituents feel connected to the political process, and my staff has always been as accessible as possible to you. Due to the budget crisis, my staff will not be able to attend the numerous events and activities throughout my district. However, I encourage you to call and visit my District offices (below), and let us know how we can continue to help.

Proposition 84 funding (drinking water) for public water systems is currently available on line. The Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control, River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 was passed by California voters in the November 2006 general election. I have personally met with staff from various state agencies, including the Department of Public Health to relay the many issues faced by residents and water districts in the 30th Assembly District. I encourage water agencies in my district to apply today!

www.cdph.ca.gov/services/funding/Pages/Prop84.aspx

My Legislative Highlights

My bill, AB 2572, passed out of the Assembly Health Committee with a 10-0 vote. This bill would require every covered food facility, with at least 20 other outlets in the state with the same trade name, to disclose specific nutritional information for each standard food item. **The required nutritional information would include: Total number of Calories, Amount of Fat, Saturated Fat, and Trans Fat, Amount of Carbohydrates, and Amount of Sodium.** This information would allow consumers to make informed choices about their food choices and would still allow businesses to retain flexibility in how best to provide the information to their customers. I believe this is a common sense approach, balancing the needs of consumers without overburdening our businesses.

I am proud to announce that my legislation (AB 2342) to place the California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley in statute cleared its first hurdle of the year by unanimously passing out of the Assembly Committee on Jobs, Economic Development, and the Economy. This legislation has received strong bipartisan support and is supported by most of the cities, businesses, school districts, and counties throughout the 8-county San Joaquin Valley. The Partnership is an innovative public-private partnership approach to improving the living and economic conditions of all residents throughout the Valley. **Special thanks to Jennifer Dansby of the Council of Fresno County Governments for coming to testify in support of the bill.**

My bill, AB 2219, cleared its first two legislative hurdles, passing both the Assembly Committees on Local Government and Water, Parks, and Wildlife with bipartisan support. **The measure seeks to encourage developers to incorporate more water-saving features into the designs of future subdivisions.** Under current California law, anytime a developer proposes a subdivision of more than 500 units, they are required to submit a study that projects the future demand on the local water supply the new subdivision would create. This bill would allow local water agencies to take into account any permanent water-saving measures that a developer uses in

the houses. These credits will, in turn, allow developers to build more houses with less water at a time when California is bracing for a major increase in population. AB 2219 now goes to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

My Assembly Concurrent Resolution, ACR 114, passed out of the Assembly with bipartisan support. It requests the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in consultation with the Legislature, to **convene a committee to investigate cost efficiencies for school districts operating home-to-school transportation programs.** The Home-to-School transportation program provides funding for transportation costs for approximately 963,000 students, statewide. Rural counties and school districts that must bus larger numbers of students longer distances are most impacted by the under funding of school transportation program costs.

Constituents Visit Sacramento

Kings County Assessor Ken Baird met with me to discuss legislation that would help his office improve the ability of local government to more quickly reassess appreciating property values. We also discussed ways to help educate local residents on the best ways to request a property tax reassessment when they believe their property has depreciated in value.

www.countyofkings.com/acr/Assessor/index.html

I enjoyed meeting students from **Ms. Agado's and Ms. Martin's 5th grade class at Mark Twain Elementary School in Corcoran.** It is always a pleasure to meet the wonderful kids from the 30th Assembly District when they come to visit the Sacramento. After speaking with them, my staff gave the students a tour of the Capitol.

It was nice to talk with a **Youth Leadership class of the Tulare County Farm Bureau** during a recent visit. Over 20 students from various Tulare County high schools came to discuss technical and educational agriculture bills, ask questions about agriculture's impact on the Central Valley, and gain a first-hand look on the legislative process. www.tulcofb.org

In the District

I joined James Tilton, Secretary of Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), at a roundtable discussion in Coalinga. The Secretary talked about prison issues as they relate to the Central Valley, including a possible reduction in water allocations. Several cities have expressed concerns regarding CDCR plans that would increase inmate populations without increasing water allocations. We also shared thoughts on the impact of AB 900 and the budget on CDCR and communities in the 30th Assembly District.

Congratulations to the Alliance Against Family Violence and Sexual Assault, the Bakersfield Rescue Mission, and Bethany Services. Each of these Bakersfield-based non-profit organizations received funding from the Emergency Housing and Assistance Program within the Department of Housing and Community Development. The awards provide for basic shelter

assistance combined with services such as counseling, substance abuse treatment, and job training.

Meeting Requests

If you or your organization would like to set up a time to meet with me or would like for me to attend an event you are sponsoring, please feel free to contact my **Executive Secretary Rozanne Jones** at (916) 319-2030 or by e-mail at Rozanne.Jones@asm.ca.gov

Internships

I am accepting applications for the internship program in my **Hanford, Bakersfield** and **Sacramento** offices. Candidates should be residents of the **30th Assembly District**, possess solid research and communication skills, and have a strong interest in public policy and political issues facing the **Central Valley**. Applications can be found by going to:
<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a30>.

For Hanford office internships contact **Richard Valle** at (559) 585-7170 or by e-mail at:
Richard.Valle@asm.ca.gov

For Bakersfield office internships contact **Nerissa Robinson** at (661) 334-3745 or by e-mail at:
Nerissa.Robinson@asm.ca.gov

For Sacramento office internships contact **Derek Chernow** at (916) 319-2030 or by e-mail at:
Derek.Chernow@asm.ca.gov

Bakersfield Office:

601 24th St.,
Suite A
Bakersfield, CA 93301
Phone: (661) 334-3745
Fax: (661) 334-3796

Hanford Office:

321 N. Douty St.,
Suite B
Hanford, CA 93230
Phone: (559) 585-7170
Fax: (559) 585-7175

Capitol Office:

State Capitol
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249
Phone: (916) 319-2030
Fax: (916) 319-2130

Email: Assemblymember.Parra@assembly.ca.gov

Web Site: <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a30/>

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